DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 175 464 IR 007 637

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TITLE Accessibility to Resources for Educators of Adults.
PUB DATE May 77
NOTE 16p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; *Educational Resources; Information Dissemination; *Information Needs; *Information Services; Information Sources; Professional Continuing Education; *Resource Materials; Subject Index Terms
IDENTIFIERS *Access to Information; Clearinghouse of Resources for Educators of Adults

ABSTRACT

A key factor in implementing an individual program for professional development among educators of adults is the availability and accessibility of the resources, about which there are specific issues and concerns. The numerous print and non-print resources, which are available through various organizations, often in different languages, fall into six general areas: social instruments, institutions, publications and other information sources, administrative supports, human expertise, and awards. The task is to provide access for adults sometimes through alternative means, to all of the learning resource opportunities and alternatives so that they may select the most appropriate at the particular time and place. As with all learning, the learner is the key, and accessibility, which includes identification and selection, should be viewed from the point of view of the user. In order to identify resources, it is of prime importance for the individual to define the problem to be resolved through a statement of clear and explicit objectives. Other factors affecting accessibility include physical limitations, psychological and intellectual factors, and the ability of the learner to use the resources. Basic documents developed at the Clearinghouse of Resources for Educators of Adults at Syracuse University provide a guide for accessibility to resources. (CWM)

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ED175464

ACCESSIBILITY TO RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS OF ADULTS

Prepared for

Graduate Program in Androgogy

Universidad Simon Rodriguez

Caracas, Venezuela

May 1977

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ACCESSIBILITY TO RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS OF ADULTS

Adult and continuing education depends to a substantial degree on the competencies and characteristics of the educators of adults who are providing leadership in the field. Included as educators of adults are: program and other administrators; supervisors; deans; directors; counselors; librarians and other support service personnel; teachers, faculty and students in adult education; research workers; and board members of adult education agencies. The educators of adults--the clientele--constitute a vast and diversified group, including persons functioning at the international level through to the local community. They are directing programs ranging from nationwide and comprehensive programs to the "one person show".

Because educators of adults are involved in different roles and have different professional backgrounds, there is great variation in the breadth and depth of the capacities they need to learn to participate and contribute effectively and efficiently. Learning, an individual process, depends on the interest, aptitude, and the capacity of the individual to learn. The need for training adult education personnel is clearly stated in at least four recommendations (nos. 26, 29, 39, 32) of the Third International Conference on Adult Education held in Tokyo in 1972. The need for continuing education is also explicitly stated by professional associations, government, business and many other agencies. In some cases continuing education is specifically related to relicensing and tenure. For these and other reasons, educators of adults are continuing to learn, as witnessed by the increasing number who are participants in professional development programs.

Educators of adults are committed to providing adult education for a wide range of adults including those in other professions. It seems reasonable to presume that they would practice what they preach and continue their own education. They should continue their own education following the principles and practices of androgogy and adult education.

The professional development of these learners--the educators of adults--should be regarded by them as continuing their own education in the context of lifelong education. Each should formulate an individual program for professional development.

Since it is desirable and indeed necessary for educators of adults to continue to learn and develop professionally, the task then is to implement the plan. A key factor in implementation is the availability and accessibility of the resources.

The resources for the professional development program are different for every adult. Likewise, the resources available to educators of adults vary according to the agency and the country in which it is located. The difficulty of the task of providing resources can not have been an excuse for not doing something. Some sources should and can be made available.

In this statement reference is made to the accessibility of the resources for educators of adults and accordingly the examples refer to this particular group of adult learners. The educators of adults, however, may use the statements equally well for another group of adult learners. Appropriate modifications in subject matter and other elements will of course need to be made.

As indicated in the list of categories which follows, there are many resources for the educators of adults. Resources may be in print or non-print and other formats. These resources are to assist in the educational aspect of program development and complement the areas of expertise of the educators of adults.

Although some resources may be translated into various languages, most resources are available in only one language. The resources for educators of adults may be secured through UNESCO, International Bureau of Education (IBE), and other international organizations. These and other organizations do function on a regular basis using more than one language. Likewise, national governments, such as Canada (French-English) and Switzerland (French, German and Italian) are bi-lingual or tri-lingual as prescribed by law. Some government and business organizations which have markets, clients, or special interests may also provide resources in more than one language. Publishers may issue resources in more than one language or in some cases translate resources. In other instances, of course, summaries, abstracts, or annotations may be made. Many educators of adults themselves are able to communicate in more than one tongue.

The language problem is often most acute for the beginning educators of adults who may be fluent only in a native language and often the resources that are available in that language are limited. These same educators are on the front lines in the communities working with the great body of adults and yet have little access to resources for

their own professional development.

Recognizing the wide range of clientele, there is a need for a wide range of resources. The list of categories of resources which follows has been developed from experience with the Library for Continuing Education and ERIC/AE at Syracuse University after consultation with educators of adults in over ten countries and with the assistance of librarians and other persons.

It is noted that the categories are in six general areas.

CATAGORIES OF RESOURCES

A. SOCIAL INSTRUMENTS

- AA Legislation
- AB Policy Statements

B. INSTITUTIONS

- BA Archives and Manuscripts
- BB Documentation Centers
- BC Groups and Committees (Advisory)
- BD Libraries
- BE Organizations and Associations
- BF Professional Development Programs
- BG Publications Centers - Publishers
- BH Research Facilities

C. PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

- CA Abstracting Services
- CB Almanacs - Handbooks - Yearbooks
- CC Bibliographies

CD Dictionaries

CE Directories

CF Encyclopedias

CG Indexing Services

CH Information Networks

CI Library Catalogs

CJ Periodicals - Newsletters

CK Photographs

CL Terminologies

D. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORTS

DA Facilities - Equipment

DB Finances

E. HUMAN EXPERTISE

F. AWARDS

This statement on resources is based on the premise that it is the individual and only the individual adult who learns. The task then is to provide access for the adult to all of the learning resource opportunities and alternatives so that the adult may select the most appropriate at the particular time and place.

All of the new alternative programs for adults that go under such labels as non-formal, innovative, non-traditional special degrees, open, programmed and experimental are challenging to the learner. The task is to make the alternative opportunities accessible through alternative means of access. Short cuts, systems, and other ways must be developed to simplify the plans and procedures of access if the new needs and new markets are to be met.

Even though the resources are increasing, there is the practical problem of enabling the individual to get access to the very specific resource that is appropriate and available.

As with all learning the learner is the key. It is the learner who in the final analysis sets individual objectives and goals. The learners must then build bridges or linkages with the resources to achieve their objectives. The linkages should be conducive to learning for all who can benefit and should be appropriate in terms of time, place, form and cost. Agencies, teachers, administrators, librarians and an array of other organizations and people are in themselves resources and also can facilitate the arrangements between the learner and the resources. The individual should ultimately be self-directed.

Access means more than availability of the physical resource materials or items. It means a way of reaching the contents of the resources. It is possible to have a library available but it is inaccessible if there is no catalog. Accessibility should be viewed from the point of view of the user. In some ways the words "client" or "consumer" are more appropriate than adult because the focus is placed on the individual to be reached.

The task then is to facilitate the individual's or the client's access to the resources. Since no one agency or person can supply all resources for all educators of adults, it means that the resources and the clients to be reached must be identified and selected. It is noted that the resources may be provided by a sense of mission and for altruistic reasons; or they may be provided for monetary reasons. Priorities need to be set for the development of resources by the clients and others

involved in the resources.

In order to identify the resources to help in the resolution of a problem, it is of prime importance for the individual to define or describe the problem to be resolved. It means the statement of clear and explicit objectives. To indicate the importance of being specific the following descriptors were recently put into the Educational Resources Information Center system for a computer search. The numbers indicate the number of documents identified on the printout when the given descriptor(s) were put into ERIC.

Descriptors	Documents available
Adult Education	4855
Objectives - adult education	786
Illiteracy - adult education	127
Objectives - illiteracy - adult basic education	5
Evaluation - objectives - illiteracy - adult basic education	1

It is evident that as the problem becomes more specific as a result of more descriptors the less documents are identified. It should be emphasized, too, the above search was done by computer in a few minutes. If the search had been manual, as in the case with most resources and most educators of adults, the time and effort would have been very substantial. It is noted however than only information containing the descriptors is made available and accordingly any closely related information does not appear. This is to illustrate the importance of identifying specific descriptors when searching the literature

of adult education. If not, the researcher may be referred to resources that are irrelevant to the particular project--in this case perhaps as many as over 4,800 citations.

Physical access to resources is certainly a prime factor. Materials and other resources may or may not be accessible in terms of: location; time such as hours or days; proximity to transportation; mail service; and many other items. While resources may be physically available they may or may not be accessible in terms of psychological factors. Previous experiences such as with a library, a school, an individual, or an ethnic group may encourage or discourage the individual in terms of learning. Intellectual and physiological factors also must be taken into account. Consideration should be given to their positive or negative effect on educators of adults as they strive to get access to resources.

An important aspect related to accessibility is the ability of the learner to use the resources after they have been identified,selected and made available. It is basic that a client know how to use a resource in order to learn from it, for example, to read printed materials, to view TV, to use a cassette, to use a library or documentation center and to use systems such as Educational Resources Information Center. Knowing how to use in order to learn implies the client be able to use a particular resource in order to relate past experience to present and future objectives. Only the individual learns, and accordingly he must first learn how to get access to the resources in a way meaningful to the achievement of his or her objectives. The mass of resources for educators of aoults requires some short

cuts to access.

In this statement many of the references and examples are given. Many of these references are from Syracuse University, but of course readers may identify more pertinent and appropriate resources from their own experience or vantage point. The resources at Syracuse University have been accumulated by design particularly over the past twenty-five years. Substantial funds and other resources have been contributed by the Fund for Adult Education (FAE), the U.S. Office of Education (USOE), the Ford Foundation, and many individuals and agencies. Syracuse University has also contributed substantially in services, funds, support staff, and professional leadership.

Two basic documents have been developed at Syracuse University to provide a basis for accessibility to resources. The first has been referred to previously, namely the Categories of Resources (See page 5) and the Descriptive Subject Headings. The purpose of the Categories of Resources is simply to identify the seven source areas with specific resources (A-F) under each one.

The Descriptive Subject Headings (01-88) are the descriptors under which materials have been identified, selected and/or acquired from any of the seven Categories of Resources. It is these same descriptors under which acquisition lists and other ways of disseminating information can be listed. In brief, resources are classified under Descriptive Subject Headings and it is these same Descriptive Subject Headings that are used to identify these resources to other educators of adults.

Only the headings are listed here but subheadings have been developed.

DESCRIPTIVE SUBJECT HEADINGS

01 ACCREDITATION - continuing education unit (CEU) - special degrees - credits - certification

04 ADMINISTRATION - management

12 AGENCIES - organizations - sponsors

16 COMMUNICATIONS - dissemination

20 COMPARATIVE - international

24 COUNSELING - personnel - tests

28 EVALUATION

32 FINANCES - budgeting

36 FOUNDATIONS - definitions - assumptions - rights - freedoms - philosophy - theories

40 FUTURES - planning

44 HISTORY

48 INSTRUCTION - methods - materials - facilities - equipment

52 LEARNING - psychology - motivation

56 LEGISLATION - policy

60 LIFELONG LEARNING - lifelong education - education premanente

62 PROGRAMS

64 PROGAM DEVELOPMENT - needs - objectives

68 PUBLIC RELATIONS - promotion - marketing

72 RESEARCH - problem solving

76 RESOURCES - publications

80 STATISTICS

82 STUDENTS - adults - learners - characteristic

84 TEACHERS - faculty - program administrators - staff

88 TRENDS

In the establishment and operation of the Clearinghouse of Resources for Educators of Adults procedures have been developed for using the Categories of Resources and the Descriptive Subject Headings. The Clearinghouse has been developed to provide easy access to resources by educators of adults in New York State. It is funded by the Division of Continuing Education of the State Education Department of New York State and is at Syracuse University.

An International Handbook of Resources for Educators of Adults has been developed. It provides information of various kinds and in various degrees appropriate to the specific Categories of Resource. The information is also coded and systematized to provide access for educators of adults. It is published in looseleaf printed form so that additions, deletions and modifications may be made. It is published in four issues a year and is available on an annual subscription basis.

These collections are uniformly processed according to the two basic documents previously described. When annotations are required, the Descriptive Subject Headings are utilized as far as possible.

There are five prime elements to be considered in relation to Resources for Educators of Adults. The first is identification of the Resources. The task of identification may be limited to the needs, objectives, and level of the selected clientele, the role of the sponsor of the resource services, and the types of categories of resources that have been selected or designated. As the resources are identified, other information should be gathered because of its usefulness for accessibility by the client. The information might include publisher and other source; address; cost of purchase or loan, if any; format; annotation or other description.

After the resources are identified it may be useful to acquire some of the resources. The same criteria of appropriateness would apply. In addition, other factors such as the availability of the budget, the extent of anticipated use, and the necessity or convenience to the client should also be considered. It may be that the educator of adults may have access to the resource some other way.

Third, after information about resources has been obtained and some of the resources acquired, it is necessary to process the information in a way accessible to the users. Some guidelines are: to enable easy and appropriate access by the selected client to the contents; to enable the dissemination procedure to be inexpensive, fast and convenient; and to facilitate evaluation.

After the resources have been identified and/or acquired and processed, the fourth step is the dissemination of information. It may

be decided that only information about acquired resources be disseminated.

Whether the resources themselves or information about the resources are to be disseminated, the plans and the procedures are generally the same. In any case, an awareness about the resource service must be created. It is not sufficient to operate on a "come and get it" basis. If a serious commitment is made to the professional development of educators of adults, then initiative must be taken to sell the educators of adults on its importance as well as on the ease and appropriateness of access.

Some factors must be stressed to encourage and facilitate the use of resources. The time and place should be convenient, the method of dissemination appropriate, and the format should be at the proper level of understanding.

Information must then be disseminated to evoke interest from the clientele. Many methods including visits, newsletters, phone calls, microfilm and microfiche, and mail may be used. The actual dissemination of materials should follow a simple procedure (card, phone...) for initiating the request. The resources should be sent out promptly. Even with the danger of an occasional loss, simplicity and speed are mandated. It may be appropriate to duplicate material--to produce a cassette or microfiche so that the material need not be returned and can be retained in the client's personal library. If the material is to be returned, labels, packages, and postage should be indicated or provided.

Useful support services are often offered by persons such as

education counselors and brokers. They can assist both the providers of resources in providing resources and the consumers, in gaining acess to the resources.

The fifth and final element to be considered is evaluation. Evaluation of the service should be in terms of the objectives and applied at all stages. The results should be useful to the sponsors, those involved in the activity, and the clients. Some data on the materials sent out, phone calls, visits, costs, acquisitions, requests, and other items should be obtained for decision making. The even more difficult taks of relating the use and usefulness of resources for achieving the objectives of the client and the resulting impact on the education of adults must also receive priority.

After the resources have become available it is sometimes necessary to assist the learner in using them. This assistance may come in three areas:

1. how to make decision about which resources are most appropriate
2. how to use the information about resources
3. how to use the resources themselves.

This statement describes some of the issues and concerns involved in providing appropriate resources to educators of adults. The accessibility is a significant aspect of professional development for the educators of adults. By improving their effectiveness the field of education for adults may be enhanced.

Alexander N. Charters
September 1977